

# Stories

OF NRM PARTNERS

## Project to find red meat pathway to carbon neutral



“The strength that NRMs bring to the project lies in our ‘paddock cred’, a familiarity with how farmers prefer to learn, our network of Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitators, and a sound understanding of fundamental science and policy settings.”

Justin Bellanger, South Coast NRM

Planning is underway for an ambitious multi-stakeholder project to evaluate the biodiversity of grazing systems and to design pathways that make beef, lamb and goat meat production carbon neutral in a decade, in line with Meat & Livestock Australia’s CN2030 goal.

Led by the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, the project consortium plans to set up case study farms in 10 different agro-ecological zones producing red meat, to increase producers’ understanding of factors affecting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions mitigation, productivity, profitability and natural capital.

Western Australia’s South Coast NRM has signed up as a project partner. Chief executive officer Justin Bellanger says they’re aiming to embed a strong rationale that balances the science of carbon with what farmers can actually achieve, in a climate of mutual respect and trust.

“We are hoping to set up a network of five farmer-based advisory groups with 10 producers in each, and run workshops

matching the on-ground research to show how to implement actions on farm,” Justin explained.

### NO ‘ONE SIZE FITS ALL’ SEQUESTRATION MODEL

“These could be complemented by identifying farm ‘champions’ who could drive the adoption of strategies through peer-to-peer learning, and we could develop state by state guides on how to implement actions on ground.

“In the first instance farmers need to be proud of where they stand on the spectrum, and if they are actually emitters, then they need advice on how to address that to effectively market red meat as being carbon neutral at an enterprise level.”

South Coast NRM has already completed several carbon audits of broadacre farms in the region to identify if they are carbon emitters or sequesters, but Justin says classification is not a case of one size fits all — it can change depending on whether they are mainly crop-based enterprises or meat producers managing tracts of native bush, for example.

“A lot of models have been developed in the northern hemisphere and for single

enterprises, where in Australia ours differ climatically and they’re often multi-industry enterprises,” he says.

“The focus has to be on landscape-scale solutions that work across sectors and boundaries.”

Meat & Livestock Australia says a demonstrated commitment to environmental stewardship by red meat producers through initiatives such as CN2030 will underpin Australia’s position as a responsible producer of high value, clean, safe and natural protein.

As one of a diverse group of project partners across Australia, South Coast NRM is enthusiastic about the potential for this project to provide pathways for livestock producers to become carbon neutral in the next decade.

Funded by: MLA with in-kind support from partners.

### LEARN MORE

➔ [www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/Environment-sustainability/carbon-neutral-2030-rd/cn30](http://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/Environment-sustainability/carbon-neutral-2030-rd/cn30)

